

Thessalon'ca is the principall Citie of Mace|donia: wherof the enhabitauntes of the countrey are call|ed Thessalonians. They, whan they had once recea|ued the faith, persisted in it with suche a constancie, that they suffred, accordyng to Paules example, persecucions euen of their owne Citezens, with a glad stomacke and without shrynkyng, so as the false Apostles could turne them by no maner of perswasion, from the ordinaunce of the gospell. And yet Paule beeyng afrayed of it, because he knewe the false Apostles ouerth wartnes wel ynough by experience, inasmuche as he could not go see them himselfe, he sent Timotheus: by whome, whan he was returned, Paule hanyng reporte of theyr constancie, prayseth them, with than|kes geuyng to God. This matter he treateth of in the first and second Chal|peters. In the other three, he instructeth them in sondrie offices of godly|nesse, signifying vnto them as it were with priuie ynclynges, that there were some among them, whiche were not yet altogether pure from all vncleane demeanoure of lyuyng: and that they were not all without suche, as beyng geuen to loyteryng, were a chargeable burthen to others: and a sorte of bulsye bodyes that disturbe the quietnesse of theyr congregacion, he commaun|deth to be correcte. Moreouer where some were not of a thoroughly con|firmed Iudgement as yet, concernyng the resurreccion, seying they beway|led theyr dead frendes, as though they had perished and not rather depar|ted vnto better promocions, them he enstructeth and confirmeth. And on the other syde, where some disputed of the daye of the Lordes commyng, as though it might well haue bene foreknowen and tolde of before, where as it is vncertayne to all men: Paule sayeth it shal come sodaynly, and whā no man looketh for it: to the intent we shoulde be the more ready at euery moment. This Epistle he wrote from Athenes by Tichicus a ministre after the grekes writings: and our Latine argumentes saye also, that Onesi|mus baxe hym cumpanye: howbeit there is no certayne auctour in the com|mune exemplares.

¶ The ende of the Argument.

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Page ii

The paraphrase of Erasmus vpon the first Epistle of the Apostle S. Paule to the Thessalonians.

The .i. Chapter.

The texte.

Paul and Syluanus and Timethe. Unto the congregacion of the Thessolonians, in God the father, and in the Lorde Iesus Christe. Grace be vnto you, and peace from God our father, and from the Lorde Iesus Christe. We geue God thanks alwaye for you all, makyng mencion of you in our prayers without ceasyng, and call you to remembraūce be|cause of the worke of your fayth and labour in loue, and because ye haue continued in the hope of our Lorde Iesus Christe, in the sight of God our father.

PAul and Siluanus and Tymothe, vnto the congregacion of the Thessalonians, cōsenting together in God the father and in our Lorde Iesus Christe: wishe vnto you grace and peace. We reioyce, as it is conuenient we should, for your good forewardenesse, and rendre thanks alwayes vnto God, making mencion of all you, on the behalfe of you all, as often as we talke with God in holy supplicacions, in that, it can neuer be out of our myndes, how diligently you trauayled to defend the profession of your fayth: than what exceding labour you toke for the loue, that you beare vnto the preachers of the gospel: how māfully and without shrinking you abode al thinges, through the hope and ex|pectacion of the rewardes, which our Lorde Iesus Christe hath promysed in the lyfe to come, vnto them that for his names sake care not for the displeasures of this lyfe. You shall not lose the hyre of your well do|inges, for God our father that seeth vpon what respecte you did them, is he that shall paye the hyre.

The texte.

We knowe brethren (beloued of God) howe that ye are electe. For our gospell came not vnto you by woorde onely, but also by power, and by the holy ghost, and by much cer|taintie, as ye knowe, after what maner we behaued our selves among you, for your sake. And ye became folowers of vs and of the Lorde receyuing the woorde with muche afflic|cion, with ioy of the holy ghost: so that ye were an ensample to al that beleue in Macedo|nia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the woorde of the Lorde, not in Macedonia and in Achaia onely: but your fayth also whiche ye haue vnto God, spred herselfe abroad in all quartars, so that it nedeth not vs to speake any thyng at all. For they themselves shewe of you, what maner of entryng in we had vnto you & howe ye turned to God from ymages, for to serue the lyuing and true God, and for to loke for his sonne from heauen, whom he •aysed from death: euen Iesus, whiche deliuereth vs from the wrath to come.

You your selves knowe, welbeloued brethren, that you were not chaun|ged by the persuasion of man, but that you were chosen to these purposes euen by the will of God. Neither yet haue we so slenderly

preached the gospell vnto you, as nothyng hath been shewed vnto you sauynge bare woordes, but the power of God hath confirmed our doctrine euen with euident miracles. And the holy gost was also geuē by vs, so that we were behinde in nothing, that should in any wise make for the perfite beleuyng of the gospels doctrine. For whatsoever they of Iewry attained by other mens preaching, thesame did you also atteine at our gospel teaching. And in this behalfe, how sincerely, how humbly, and how paynefully we behaued our selves among you, you can tell wel ynough. For there was no|thing whereby we myght wyne you vnto Christe, but we abode it. And you for your parte shewed not your selues vnto warde scholars, but you

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folowed streyght after the example of vs, yea rather not of vs but of the Lorde Iesu, that humbled himselfe so lowe and suffred al thinges, that he might wyne vs vnto himselfe. For you haue so hartely embraced ou• gospell preaching, that for the loue of it you haue suffred afflictions palciantly, howe many and howe greuouse soeuer they were, not onely with muche boldenesse, but also with muche gladnesse, because the holy goste, whom you receyued by our preaching as a pledge for the time, of the fel• citie to come, hath placed himselfe in your hartes: through hope of which felicitie, al sorowes become swete, whatsoever are layed vpon vs for the gospel of Christe. And the valiauntnesse of your fayth was so passing excellent, that you were an ensample to al the faythfull in the rest of Mace|donia and Achaia. For the example of that noble chiefe citie moued all* mennes mindes so sore, that the fame of the gospel sounded as it were the noyse of a Trompet wyde and brode, and published the feruencie of your fayth, that you haue to Godwa•de, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in all other countreys: so that now we see it is no nede for vs to make reporte of your godlynesse. For if we begynne at any time to speake of those matters, they are more readye of theyr owne mynde to tell vs, being instructed by the commune brute, than we can tell them: howe we entred firste vnto you to open the Gospels doctrine, and with what dililgent readinesse you receyued vs •etting al perils asyde, that semed like to* happen vnto you for our sakes, and howe ea•ely you were trayned from the supersticion of your forefathers, wherwith you wurshipped the imalges of deuils, vnto the true wurshippe of God: so as euer sence that tyme you abhorre false and dead Gods, and serue the true liuing God: and trulsting vpon his promisses, you passe nothing vpon y• pleasures of this lyfe, no more than you do vpon the displeasures of it: but looke that his sonne Iesus (by whom he hath deliuered vs freely vnto saluaciō, & promised vs the rewardes of the lyfe to come) shal come againe from heauen, and geue opely vnto the world, the thinges that he hath promised. For God raysed hym vp againe vnto

lyfe to this ende, that we might also be raysted againe vnto lyfe by him, and to haue the fruicion of the good thinges that neuer shall dye, which in this life suffre the displeasures of this worlde for his sake. And than his commyng shalbe ioyfully welcome vnto vs, inasmuche as he hath clensed vs from our sinnes in his owne bloude, and reconciled vs vnto God, and deliuered vs from the eternall punishement that was due for our transgressions.

¶ The. iiij. Chapter.

The texte.

For ye your selues (brethren) knowe of our entraunce in vnto you, howe that it was not ••• wayne: but euen after that we had suffred before, and were shamefully entreated at Philippos (as ye knowe) then were we bolde in our God, to speake vnto you the gospell of God, in muche st•yuing. For our exhortacion was not to bring you to errour, nor yet to vncleannes, neither was it with gyle: but as we were allowed of God that the gospel should be committed vnto vs: euen so we spake, not as they that please menne, but God, whiche tryeth our hertes. Neither led we our conuersacion a• any time with flattering wordes, as ye knowe: neither by occasion of couetousnesse. God is recorde: neither sought we prayse of menne, neither of you, nor yet of any other, when we might haue been in autoritie, as the Apostles of Christe, but we were tending among you, euen as a nurse cherisheth her children, so were we affectioned toward you: ou• good will was to haue dea•te vnto you, not the gospell of God only: but also ou• owne soules, because ye were deare vnto vs.

What nedeth vs to make rehearsall, seing ye your selues knowe, that albeit we came not vnto you, with bragging and staring, nor curiously mincing a sorte of great wordes, nor setting out any high Philosophie: Yet our entraunce vnto you was not vneffectuall. But where as wee had suffred many thinges at Philippos before, as you your selues knowe, and were shamefully handled with many spightfull rebukes, and so was S•as also, because of castying the prophecieng spirite out of the Damsel, that was possessed: yet neuertheles through the helpe of our God, we were not afraied euen to preache the gospel of Christ frelye among you also, and not without excedyng great daungier: wheras in case we had preached a forged wayne thyng, we should neuer haue ben in daunger of our head for that matter. For suche men as teache theyr owne doctrine, and not that, whiche they haue receaued of Christ, and teache for theyr owne avauntage, intending therby to disceauce others for theyr owne lucre sake: those haue no autoritie of theyr doctrine at al, and

drawe themselves quite a way, as sone as they drede any daungier of theyr lyues or substaunce. But the doctrine, wherunto we allured you, was not cōterfaicted, ne fayned, neyther purposed vnto disceate, ne yet vnder colourable pretence of it, we haue cloked impure sciences, as the false apostles do, nor haue doen any thing fraudulētlie▪ pretending in outwarde apperaunce one waye, and purposyng inwardly clene contrarie an o|ther waye, and vnder the title of Chryste go about our owne pelfe, after the maner of them, that make themselves Apostles: but like as god by his sonne^{*} hath chosen vs vnto this office, that we shoulde syncerely preache the gos|pell committed vnto vs, euen so do we preache vnto all men, not to crepe in fauour or commendacion with menne, but to do our office so as god may all|lowe it, who seeth the inward secretes of our hartes, and accordyng therto estemeth euery man. For we haue not flatred any man, as you know at least, nether haue we turned the worde of the gospel, nor your tractable beleuyng in to oure owne gayne, god himselfe is witnesse vnto our consciences: nether haue we hunted after the prayse of men by meanes of the gospell, either at your handes or of any other, wheras we myght haue vsed our autoritie, and brag no lesse thā the false Apostles: which though they teache vayne thinges & to their own gayne, yet they require to be honoured & waited vpon of you. But we considering what becometh the apostles of Christe, which humbled himself for our saluacions sake, haue not taken vpō vs to brag & loke hygh, but haue shewed our selues gentill & sobre among you, not eagrelly abusing you, as disciples, but w^t al lenitie bearing with your weaknesse, none other|wise than a mother nource would chearishe the tender age of her children: & so we being louingly affected towardes you, wer hartely desirous to impart vnto you, not onlye the ghospell of god as the foode of your soules, but also to bestowe our owne life: not that we loked for any reward at your handes, but that we loued you entierly with all our hertes, none otherwise than a mother loueth her owne children. We vpbrayd you not of our diligence, but we rehearse our louing affeccion.

The texte.

Ye remember brethren oure laboure, & trauayle. For we laboured daye and nyght because we would not be chargeable vnto any of you, & preached vnto you the gospel of God. Ye are witnesses, & so is god, how holyly & iustly and vnblameably, we behaued our selues among you that beleued, as ye knowe, how that we bare suche affeccion vnto euery one of

you, as a father doth vnto children, exhortyng, confortyng, and besechyng you, that ye woulde walke worthy of God, whiche hath called you vnto hys kyngdome and glory. For thys cause thanke we God also without ceassyng, because that when ye reaceaued of vs the woord (wherewith ye learned to

knowe God) ye receaued it not as the worde of man: but euen as it was in dede, the word of God, which worketh also in you that beleue.

You remembre brethren, that we forsoke no laboure nor no trauaile for your sakes, thyrsting nor mynding any other thyng els than your saluacion. And we hunted so litell for rewarde at your handes, that we wrought with our handelabour daye and night, to get our lyuing withal, because we would be a burthen to none of you all. The false apostles cloute in their goslpel among you, and wrythe to them selues as muche as they can get: and we haue preached the gospel of god vnto you frely without any thing. And you are my witnesses, and god himselfe is my recorde, how holily, how vprightlye, and how vnblameable we haue behaued oure selues towarde you that beleued, as you know by proued experience, with how syncere a loue we did al thinges, that towardes euery one of you we were euen so affected, as any father is towardes his owne children, now beseching, now comforting, now chargyng you, not to geue vs any thing, but to leade a lyfe worthy of god, whiche, whan you were afore tyme voyde of all godlynnesse, hath called you through fayeth to the studie of true godlinesse, and hathe also through tem|porall afflictions, called you into his kingdome and glory Immortal. Al is well: you acknowlage the goodnesse of God: and for that cause we also redet thanks vnto him continuallie, for kendllyng your heartes after suche sorte, that whan we came in a poore basse estate vnto you and hauyng no shewe of dignitie to set vs forward, yet as soone as you had hearde the gospell prealched of vs, you receaued it, not as a fable or the word of mā, but as the word that came frō god himself, as it was in dede: for he himselfe spake euē by vs.

The texte.

For ye brethren became folowers of the congregacyons of God whiche in Iewry are in Chryst Iesu: for ye haue suffered lyke thynges of your ky•smenne, as we oure selues haue suffered of the Iewes. Which as they kylled the Lord Iesus, and theyr owne Prophetes, euen so haue they persecuted vs: and God they please not, and are contrary to all men, and hynder vs, that we should not speake vnto the Gentiles, that they myght be sauēd, to fulfil theyr synnes alwaye. For the wrath of God is come on them, euen to the vtmost.

The word of man is weake & vneffectual, but the word of god is effectually mightie: which, as sone as you had dronken of it, was not ydle, but began to worke his power in you, so as it might euidently ynough appeare, y• you had receaued thesame spirite, in y• you incontinently began to folow the exāples of the other congregaciōs of god y• professed Iesus Christ in Iewrie. That, which Christ: that, that we: that, that the rest of the Iewes whiche embrace the doctrine of the gospel, haue suffred of their owne

countrey menne, vnto whome this doctrine is odious, the like haue you also suffred of your owne townes men. For like as they kylled the lorde Iesus, & slewe his prophetes before him, bicause they could not abyde the trueth: euen so do they also per|secute vs that are the true gospel preachers, with such blindnes of harte, that they prouoke euen the wrath of god vpon themselues, because they rebell al|gainst his will, & go against al men, as the very enemyes of mankinde, & as men that enuie al mens saluacion which is offred through faith, & go about to draw al men w^t them into destrucciō. For they do not let vs after this sort of any priuate displeasure, but they enuy all the gentiles their wealthe, and trouble vs for this intent, that we should not preache the gospell vnto the

gentiles, wherby they myght be saued: as though it were but a smal mat|ter for thē to haue slayne the Prophetes before, and byanby Christ after the Prophetes, except they persecute and dispatch vs out of the waye al|so: so as they may finish the whole heape of their mischeues, and lay this, as it were the Sūme totall of their wickednesse, alwayes to be like mal|nered to themselues, and neuer to repent from their madnesse. By reason wherof they prouoke the wrathe of God so sore vpon them, that they are to be despaired of, forsomuch as of a purposed malice they spurne awaie the mercy of God from thē, and by al possible meanes oppugne the gospel, through whose onely helpe they myght be deliuered from destruccion.

The texte.

For as muche brethren as we are kept from you for a season, as cōcerning the bodely prelsence (but not in the herte) we enforced the more to see you personally with great desyre. And therfore we would haue come vnto you, I Paul once and agayne: but Satan with|stode vs. For what is ou[•] hope or ioy, or crowne of reioysing? are not ye it in the presence of our Lorde Iesus Christes at his cumming? yes, ye are our glory and ioy.

But the more I loue you, brethren, for the readinesse and promptitude of your faythe, the more I am enflamed with the louyng desyre of you, be|cause beyng kepte from you for a tyme, I coulde not haue the fruicion of your company, wherof I was wondrefully desirous, although we were neuer absent in minde. And yet this could not satisfie y[•] lone that we beare towards you, except I should also presentlie se you euen with my body|lyeies. Wherfore I thought it not ynough, to send any bodye to you, or to speake with you by letters, but I Paul went about once and eftesones to come to you my selfe, so as I myght the more thoroughly confirme your

consciencs: But Satan withstode this purposed endeuour, which by the wicked lewes hyndred my cumyng vnto you. And what maruayle is it, though I bee so desirous of you? For what other thyng is there in this world, wherwith I can content myselfe, wherof I may aduaūce myselfe, wherof I maye perswade myselfe to enherite felicitie? I defie all thinges incomparision of the gospel of Christ. Than what is our hope, or what is our ioye, or what is our crowne? Among others of the gentiles whom I haue wonne vnto Christ, are not you also? albeit not in the sight of the worlde, yet verily it is with the Lorde Iesus Christ. Whan the enemyes of the gospell are throwen vnder foote, and the triumphe openly kepte at his cūming, what ensignes and what other tokens of victory shal I bring forthe in that royall cumpany, but you and suche other like as you be? In the meane tyme I am inassured hope of these thinges. You are the frute & the matier of our glorye, you are our ioye, in case you perseuer vnto the ende in those thinges that you haue begonne.

The .iii. Chapter.

The texte.

Wherefore, sence we coulde no lenger forbear, we thought it good to remayne at Athens alone, and sent Tymothe ou• brother & minister of God, and the helper forth of our labour in the gospel of Christe to stablishe you: and to comforte you concerning oute faith, that no man should be moued in these affliccyons. For ye youre selues knowe, that we are euen appoynted thereunto. For when we were with you, we tolde you before, that we should suffer tribulacion, euen as it came to passe, and as ye knowe. For thys cause when I coulde no lenger forbear. I sent, that I might haue knowlege of your faith, lest by some meanes the tempter had tempted you, and lest ou•e labour had •eue bestowed in vayne.

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Therfore, inasmuche as we coulde not suffre the wante of you any longer, and seeyng I coulde not come my selfe to you, I thought it good, to doe that by my moste faythfull companiōn, that I coulde not doe by my selfe: and to put him in stede of my selfe. Therfore we taried still alone at Athenes, and from thence sente Tymothe our brother, a tryed minister of God, and an helpfelowe of our office, which we haue to doe in the gospell of Christ: because we had leauer wante the comforte of that so deare a singular and so necessarie a companion for the tyme, than to geue occasion that you should thinke we had vtterly geuen ouer lokyng to your state of thinges. And verily we haue sente hym, not for any cause of our owne, but chiefly for your sakes, that he myght establishe and comforte your consciences, and to shewe you, that for all these paynfull

affliccions, wherewith I am tossed hereawaye and therawaye, myne harte is nothing discouraged, but the glorye of the gospell is a great deale better auaunced, leste any of you shoulde be dismayed, by reason of myne affliccions, whiche you heare tell of. For you must not thinke it any neweltie, though these thinges happen to the preachers of the gospell, in asmuche as you knewe a good while a goe, that I was chosen of god to this same ende, that through suffring of affliccions of my body, I myght auaunce the name of Christ: and so in this behalfe to be like my Lord and maister. For euen than whan we were pre|sent with you, we tolde you the same before, that we should suffre affliccion for the gosselles sake. And as I tolde you before it should be, so you see it now happened, like as also you haue knowen it happen before. As for me, there was nothing hapened vnto me vnloked for, nor any thig that I tolde not you of afore, so as you haue the lesse cause to be discouraged. Wherefore, considering that for the great care I take for you (euen whan all thing is at the surest) I coule not be quiet but long after you still, I sent Tymothe (as I sayed afore) for this purpose, that by hym (as well in a maner as I were present there my selfe) I might knowe the stedfastnesse of your fayth, and might trye, yf he that kepeth continuall watche to subuerte them that be good, had tempted any of the weaker sorte of you, and so in them my labour had been loste.

The texte.

But nowe lately, when Timothe came from you vnto vs, and declared to vs your fayth and loue, and how that ye haue good remembraunce of vs alwaye, desi•yng to see vs as we also desyre to see you. Therefore brethren we receiued consolacid by you, in al our aduersitie and necessitie through your fayth. For nowe are we alyue, yf ye stande sted fast in the Lord. For what thanks can we recompence to God againe for you, ouer al that ioy, that we ioy for your sakes before our God: praying nyght and daye exceedyngly, that we might see you presently, and might fulfyll the thynges which are lackyng vnto your fayth? God hymselfe our father, and our Lord Iesus Christ shall gyde oure iourney vnto you: the Lord also shall increace you and make you flowe ouer in loue one towarde another, and towarde all men, euen as we do toward you: that he may make your heartes stable and vnblameable, in hollynnes before God oure father, at the commyng of our Lord Iesus Chryst with al sayn•tes.

But whan Tymothe of late returned from you to vs againe, and brought vs mery tydings, shewing that you persiste aswell constauntly in your fayth without shrinking, as also that your vnfeyned charitie is the same that it was, and that our beeyng a sondre hathe not brought vs out of remembraunce with you, but that you haue vs in mynde alwayes

cōtinually, and that you are euer desirous to see vs, as we are to see you: there is no necessitie nor any sorowe, that I am pressed withall, but I can heare it paciently sence I knewe that you abode constantly in your fayth, whiche whan I was afrayed of, I was nothing afrayed of my selfe. For I thinke that I am altogether safe, if your fayth continue safe. Nowe we liue, and thinke our selves deliuered from al maner of daūghter, in case you, through the helpe of Christ Iesu, persiste constantly in y^e you haue begun. It yrketh not me to suffre these euils, so that the frutes be answerable in you, for whose sakes I abyde them. Whiche thyng, for asmuche as I perceyue to be in dede, so as the gospel groweth in acquayntaunce among the Gentiles dayly more and more, what thanks worthy so great a benefite are we able to rēdre vnto God? by whose goodnes so excellent ioy, wher|with we reioyce withal our hartes for your foreward proceding, chaun|ceth vnto vs euen among these sorowes, our God bearyng recorde of the same, vnto whose goodnesse you are bounde for that you continue sted|fast: of whome oure duetie is in our prayers daye and nighte, to desyre this thing in more ample wise, that by his mercy we may at one tyme or other see you agayne. For with personall presence, some thing is doen, that nother letters nor messenger, how trustie so euer he be, can be hable to accomlishe. For this cause sake therfore, I am desirous to see you, to the entent if any gospellyke discipline be wanting, I might supplie it and amende it. Furthermore my prayer is, that where I cānot so doe by mea|nes of wicked persones, God himselfe our father and his sonne Iesus Christe our Lorde would vouchesafe to take awaye those lettes, & open me a free passage vnto you, and also in the meane season so to encrease you with his gyftes, that I may see you to my great comforte. Which thyng shalbe, in case he make you aboundaunte and plenteouse in mutuall chari|tie among your selues: and not among your selues only, but also towar|des all men, like as we also haue a certayne excellencie of loue towards all you, beyng ready euen to suffre death for your saluacion: and that he would so confirme your consciences, that your vprightnesse cannot be blamed on any behalfe, not only with menne, but muche rather with God the father, whom nothing escapeth, in the cumming of our Lorde Iesus Christe, at which time it shall openly appeare in the sight of all Sainctes, not only what euery one hath doen, but also with what conscience euery one hath done it.

¶ The .iiii. Chapter.

The texte.

Furthermore, we beseche you (brethren) and exhorte you by the Lord Iesus[•] that ye in|crease more and more, euen as ye haue receyued of vs, how ye ought to walke and to please God. For ye knowe what commaundementes we gaue you by our Lord Iesus Christ. For this is the will of God euen your holynes, that ye should abstaine from fornicacyon, and that euery one of you should know how to kepe his vessel in holynes &

honour, & not in the luste of concupiscence as doe the hethen, which know not God, that no man opresse and del|fraude his brother ●●●bargayning: because that the Lord is the auenger of al such thinges, as we tolde you before, and testified. For God hath not called vs vnto vnc|lennes, but vn|to holynes. He therfore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, whiche hath sente his holy spirite among you.

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M Oreouer brethren we beseche and exhorte you by the Lorde Iesus, forasmuche as you are nowe sufficiently taught of vs, after what sorte you ought to behaue your selues, and with what endeouours to please God, geue your diligence not only to perseuer still in that you haue learned, but also to excede your selues in dayly en|creases of forewardenesse. For you knowe and remem|bre what preceptes I gaue, not by the autoritie of my selfe, but by the au|toritie of our Lorde Iesus Christe. I gaue none of these thynges in com|maundement that the false Apostles cloute in among you, of the ceremo|nies* of Moses lawe, of the excellencie and visions of Angels, as though there were entraunce by them vnto saluacion: but those thynges only that I knewe certaynly to be acceptable vnto God. For this is the wyll of God, that you kepe your selues holy and vnspotted, and not onely to be chaste in soule, but also in body, that you may abstayne from whoredome wherwith the bodies are defiled. The body is the dwellyng house of the soule, and the soule is the Inne of God. Than lyke as it is necessarie for the soule to be pure, because of the geaste God: so is it decen|te for the bo|dye to be pure because of the inhabitour, the soule. Therefore let euery one knowe howe to geue this honoure to his sely carcas, as a frayle vessel, that he kepe it cleane and vn|defiled: and not suffre it to be spotted with the disease of filthy desyres and lustes: whiche thyng is so farre vnwor|thy the state of Christians, that it is the state of no nacion of people, but of them that haue no knowlage of God, but thinke that euery one may law|fully doe what he lusteth without punishment, and that all is honest that is pleasaūt to the body. But the mischief of lust doubleth his mischief, in case a man loyne it with the Iniurie of his brother: as whan a man v|surpeth an other mannes wyfe. Let no manne therfore eyther in this case or in other matters, in vsurpyng ouermuche to hymselfe, defraude his brother, inasmuche as God wil suffer none of these thinges vn|reuenged: and seying that baptisme shal not onely not auaille them that commit these offences, but also make to their more greuouse punishement, lyke as we haue tolde & recorded vnto you before. For God hath not called vs from the ordinaunce of our former lyfe, to the entente that beyng once washen cleane we should be walowed into the same filthinesse again: but to main|teyne in holynesse and puritie of lyfe the innocencie that was once

freely geuen vs. And that we should not through filthy desyres cast away from vs the holy ghoste, whiche is the louer of Chastitie.

These matters (I say) I haue both recorded and doe recorde again, that they are not the preceptes of me but of God: so that whosoever contem|neth them, contemneth not man which is the warning geuer, but God that is the commaundement maker: who hath emparked his holy spirite vnto you, for this purpose, that you should by his inspiracion embrace godli|nesse. Against this holy spirite euery one worketh despite, that through filthy lustes polluteth his owne body.

The texte.

But as touchyng brotherly loue, ye nede not, that I wryte vnto you. For ye are taught of God, to loue one another, ye and that thing verily ye doe vnto all the brethren whiche are in all Macedonia. We beseeche you brethren, that ye encrease more and more, & that

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ye study to be quiete, and to medle with your owne busines, and to worke with your han|des, as we commaunded you: that ye may behaue your selues honestly toward them that are without, and that nothing be lackyng vnto you.

Furthermore, as concernyng the loue that christians owe to christians, I thinke it not necessarie for me to admonishe you by these my letters. For you are taught immediatlye from heauen by the spirite of Christ (whereof you haue tasted) that ye should loue one another. Whiche thing you declare in very dede, in that you loue all the brethren with a christian loue, not onelye that are at Thessalonica, but also in al Macedonia. Myne exhortacion ther|fore shall not be vnto you, to do the thyng that you do of your owne accorde, but in that, that you do by admonicion of the spirite, to excede your selues, and go forward alwayes better and better. And looke you geue circum|spect hede, that your quietnesse be not interrupted by meanes of idle persōs, and suche as be curious meddlers of other mennes matters, but let euerye one applie his owne businesse. And yf any want substaunce wherof to lyue, let hym prouide with his owne handes, so as he maye bothe helpe hymselfe, and releue them that be nedie, like as we commaunded you before: to the intent ye mighte behaue your selues honestlye towardes them, that haue not professed Christ: at whose handes it were shame for your profession, either to begge or to do any vncomelie thyng for nede. But rather let euery one get with his handes, so as he want no necessary thyng. And that man is easely satisfied, that is content with a litell.

The texte.

I woulde not brethren that ye shoulde be ignoraunte concernyng them whiche are fallen aslepe, that ye sorowe not as other do, whiche haue no hope. For yf we beleue that Iesus dyed, and rose agayne: euen so them also whiche slepe by Iesus, wyll God bryng alayne with hym. For this saye we vnto you in the worde of the Lorde, that we which shal lyue, and shall remayne in the commyng of the Lorde, shall not come ere they which slepe. For the Lorde hymselfe shall descende from heauen, with a showte, and the voyce of the Archangell and trompe of God. And the dead in Christ shall aryse fyrst: then we whiche shall lyue (euen we which shal remayne) shall be caught vp with them also in the cloudes, to meete the Lorde in the ayer. And so shall we euer be with the Lorde. Wherefore, comforte your selues one another with these wordes.

Finally, as touchyng the mistery of the resurreccion, I cannot be contēt to haue you ignoraunt, lest you should make importune sorrowfull mourning for them, that slepe in the truste of the promyses of the ghospell, as though they perished: that you should not mourne, I saye, after the example of the gentiles, whiche bewayle the death of theyr frendes, because they haue no hope of theyr resurreccion. But the death of christians is nothyng els but a slepe, from the whiche they shall awake agayne at the commyng of Christ, to lyue a great deale more blissefully. For why shoulde we not truste, the same thyng to come to passe in the membres, that we knowe alreadye perfourmed in the head? For if we beleue verely, that Iesus was deade after y^e maner of man, & rose agayne to immortall life, it foloweth of necessitie, that we ought to beleue also, that god the father, whiche raySED vp Iesus, wil also bring with him those that professed Iesus and slept in the assured truste of his promyses, alayne agayne at the commyng of his sonne, so as the heade shal not wante his membres. We bable not vnto you an humayne fable, but we tell you the thyng that we learned of Christe hymselfe, that is to wete, that we, whiche shall be founde remaining aliue in this world at the lordes cōming,

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shal not be presented in the sight of Iesus, before that they whiche were dead afore, be presented also. Some wil saye: how shall it be possible for them to be presented, that were buried and turned into duste? Euen the Lorde Iesus hymselfe by the voyce of the aungell soundyng out of heauen with the trompette of God shal rayse them vp and warne them to awake and come quicklly. And than suche as had slept in this hope, shall returne agayne vnto lyfe, and ryse out of theyr graues. And that doen, we that shall remayne and bee founde aliue in the cumming of Christ, shall be

sodainly taken vp together with them that are raised againe vnto life, through the cloudes, that wē may mete the Lorde in the ayer. And from thence he shal carrye vs with him in|to heauen, to liue with him perpetuallie. Now therfore, see you comfort eue|ry one another with these sayinges, so as the death of the godly vere you not to sore, inasmuche as it is more worthy gratulacions and reioycinges, than your sorowfull lamentacions.

The .v. Chapter.

The texte.

Fynally of the tymes and seasons (brethren) it is no neade that I wryte vnto you▪ for ye your selues knowe perfectly, that the daye of the Lorde shall come, euen as a thefe in the nyght. For when they shal saye, peace, and al thynges are safe, then shal soden destruc|cyon come vpon them (as sorow commeth vpon a woman trauaylyng with chylde) & they shal not scape. But ye brethren are not in darcaenes, that that daye should come on you as a thefe.

Now you haue the manier and ordre of the resurreccion, inas|much as it was conuenient for you to knowe it. But as for the tymes and the very seasons whan these thinges shal be, it is no parte of our office to write vnto you. And it is so vn|auayleable, that euen the lord himself would open no suche thyng vnto his disciples whan they demaunded it of hym. For you knowe playnlye, and we haue taught you before, that the daye of the Lorde shal come sodaynely vpon the world vnloked for, euen as a thefe in the night, breaketh in vpon them that are aslepe: and shall ouerlaye them that are careles, than moste chiefly, whan it shall be the least loked for. For whan suche as beleue not the ghospel, shal saye in theyr moste loylytie, there is no daungier, but all is peace and safe, the Lord wyll not come: than theyr destruccions shall come sodainlye vpon them, like as a wo|man with childe is sodainly payned with sorowe in her trauayle, before the daye commeth that she loked for. And they shall haue no waye to escape op|pression, before they fele it sodainly vpon them. That daye shall be a dreadful daye, to them that beyng blynded in theyr owne viciousnes, leade their lyfe as it were in the night: but vnto you brethren, it is not so dreadfull leste it should take you vnprouyded.

The texte.

Ye are all the chyl dren of lyght, and the chyl dren of the daye. We are not of the nyght nether of darkenes. Therfore let vs not slepe as do other: but let vs watche, and be sober. For they that slepe, slepe in the night, and they that be drōcken, are droncken in the nyght. But let vs whiche are of the daye, be

sober, armed with the brest place of fayth and loue, & with hope of saluacion for an helmet. For God hath not appoynted vs to prouoke wrath vnto oure selues, but to obtayne saluacyon by the meanes of oure Lord Iesu Chryst, which dyed for vs: that whether we wake of slepe, we should lyue together with hym. Wherefore, comforte your selues together, and edifye euery one another, euen as ye do.

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For all you that folowe Christe, belong not to the kyngdome of darkenes but to the kyngdome of light and of god, namely yf oure diligence of godlynesse be aunswerable to our profession, and yf we lyue so, as it maye appere that we watche in the dayelight and not lye snourtyng in darkenesse.

Therefore if we wil not be taken vnwares, let vs not sleape, as other do, that haue no knowlage of Christes lyght: but let vs watche and be sobre, taking alwayes circumspect hede, that we cōmit nothing through vnaduisednesse, that maye offende the iyes of God and men. For like as they that slepe after the bodie, sleape in the night, and those that are wynedrunken, are drunken in the night: euen so those that yawne and slumbre in naughtinesse, are occupied in darkenesse of the soule, and those that are drunken with the lustes & daliaunces of the worlde are entangled with darkenes of the mynde. But as for vs vnto whom the daie of the gospel hath cast his light, it standeth vs in hande to be sobre and watchyng, alwayes prepared and ready agaynst the sodayne assaulte of the enemye, that kepeth continuall watche for oure delstruccion: and to be harnessed with spirituall armour: In steade of a breste plate to put on fayth and charitie: for the helmet, hope of eternall saluacion. And than shall you not nede to distruste. God will be ready himselfe to delfend those that be watching. For god hath not called vs to the doctrine of the gospell for this purpose, that lyuing otherwyse than it maketh mencion, we should double the wrathe and vengeance of God vpon vs, but that in obeying hym we might obteyne saluacion, by the helpe of our Lorde Iesus Christ, who suffred death for vs, to the intēt, that if it chaunce vs to lyue, we maye lyue with hym through godlynesse and hope of immortalitie, and if it chaunce vs to dye, we maye lyue with hym neuer to dye. To thintent that you maye so do more and more, encourage euery one other with mutuall exhortacions, and styrre one another to goe on forward, like as you do alreadye euen of your owne accorde.

The texte.

We beseche you brethren that ye knowe them which laboure among you, and haue the ouersight of you in the Lorde, and geue you exhortacion, that

ye haue them in hye relpucacion thorow loue, for theyr workes sake, and be at peace with them.

Furthermore we beseche you, brethren, to haue cōsideracion of them, that labour among you, and haue ouersight of you in teachyng of the ghospell, and do admonishe you with what thynges you ought to please Christ: that where you are bounden to geue honoure vnto all men, yet haue them in relgarde aboue others, requiting thē the loue, that they bestowe vnto you in sulsteynyng so many laboures and daungiers for your sakes. And yf they relproue you for your faultes at any tyme, yet haue peace with them. For he is not worthy to be hated, that reproueth a man for his profite.

The texte.

We desyre you (brethren) warne them that are vnruelye, comforte the feble mynded, lyfte vp the weake, be pacient towarde all men. Se that none recompence euyl for euyl vnto any man: but euer folowe that, whiche is good, both among your selues, and to all men. Reioyce euer. Praye continually. In all thynges geue thanks. For this is the wyll of God thorow Christ Iesu towarde you. Quenche not the spirite. Despyse not prophecynges. Eramen all thynges, kepe that whiche is good. Abstayne from all euel apperaunce. The very god of peace sanctifie you thorowe out. And I praye God that youre whole spilrite, and soule and bodye, maye be preserued: so that in nothyng ye maye be blamed in the

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commynng of our Lorde Iesus Christ. Faythfull is he whiche called you, whiche will also do it. Brethren, praye for vs. Grete all the brethren with an holy kysse. I charge you in the Lorde, that this Epistle be red vnto all the holy brethren. The grace of the Lorde Iesus Christ be with you. Amen.

And thus I beseche you (euerye man accordyng to his habilitie) to laye your helpyng handes to the forewardyng of their offices. Admonishe them that lyue after their owne lustes and disquiet the ordre that you obserue. Comforte the weake harted, releue the feble, be gentill and paciēt towards all men, not onely towards the Christians, but also them that are straunlgers from Christ. Beware that none recompense wrong for wrong, nor relquite euill dede for euill dede. For truely it is vnsemyng to folowe the ec|ample of naughty persones in a naughty matier, and become lyke condic|oned vnto them. But rather geue diligence to do good vnto all folkes, not onely the christians vnto christians, but also vnto all maner of folkes, whe|ther they haue deserued it or not deserued it: beyng certaynly assured, y^t your diligence shall not be lost: for Christ is

your suertie. In consideracion wher|of, whatsoeuer chaunceth vnto you, reioyce alwayes so that godlynesse bee safe: call vpon God with your prayers continually without ceassyng, and geue thanks whatsoeuer befalleth you. For so it standeth with gods plea|sure, that there shall be occasion alwayes, to rendre thanks vnto the father for his bounteousnes to you warde by Iesus Christe. And this furthermore standeth you in hande to take hede of, that no variaunce rise among you by reason of euery ones sondrye sortes of giftes. Vnto some one chaunceth the gift of tongues, to syng in the spirite: albeit it is but a gift of the basest sorte, yet quenche it not in any wise, but cherishe it rather, y^t it maye profyte better and better. Vnto some chaunceth the gifte of prophecie, to declare the misti|call sence of the scripture: reiecte it not in any wyse whatsoeuer is spoken. Suffre the one paciently that he maye go on forwarde, heare the others se|tence, with iudgement: but after suche sorte that he be not to muche molested in his speakyng. Let no mā make so muche of his owne giftes, that he con|temne another mannes. Trye al thynges, but let euery man holde the thing that he iudgeth requisite. Whatsoeuer it be that hath y^e similitude of a good thyng, is not to be despised. Notwithstanding it behoueth you to abhorre so muche from euil, that you ought to absteyne euen from those thynges, that haue the shewe of euill. But vnto these matters, it shall be your parte to ap|plie all your diligent studies. And god the auctor of peace, vnto whō is ac|ceptable both the lyke consent of mynde & the like speache of wordes that mē do wholly vse together in suche thynges as be honest, bryng to passe, y^t you maye be perfite ly holy, & vnspotted, so as the soule maye be answerable vn|to the spirite, the body aunswerable to the soule, & the spirite selfe answerable to God: y[•] there be nothyng to fynde you faultie in, & that you maye styll perseuer in this state of holynesse continually, vntil the cumming of our lord Iesus Christ. There is no cause for you to distruste of. For he is sure of his promyse, that hath called you vnto this holynesse, & to the rewardes of the same: he hymselfe shall finishe that he hath begonne, and perfourme that he hath promised. Brethren, helpe you forewarde with your prayers the labours that we go aboute. Salute all the brethren with a kysse, not suche a one as the commune sorte of salutours doe geue, but with an holye kysse

and worthy Christian loue. I charge you by the Lorde, that this Epistle be rehearsed to al the holy brethren. The grace and beneuolent fauour of our Lorde Iesu Christe be alwayes with you.

Amen.

Thus endeth the paraphrase vpon the first Epistle of S. Paul the Apostle to the
Thessalonians.